EMR-ISAC
Emergency Management & Response-Information Sharing & Analysis Center

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The U.S. Fire Administration maintains the **Emergency Management and Response – Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC)**.

For information regarding the EMR-ISAC visit **www.usfa.dhs.gov/emr-isac** or contact the EMR-ISAC office at: **(301) 447-1325 and/or emr-isac@fema.dhs.gov**.

The InfoGram

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Back to Basics: Hand-Washing 101

One of the most basic rules of sanitation and infection control in our modern lives is hand-washing, yet studies show the general public either fail to wash their hands as long as recommended or fail to do it entirely. Some studies even say hand-washing rates are low among EMS workers.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends washing hands with soap and (hot or cold) water, lathering for at least 20 seconds. To know for sure you are washing long enough, sing or hum the "Happy Birthday" song twice through. Rinse hands well; dry with a paper towel or air dry. Make sure to focus on areas often missed, like fingernails and between fingers.

Medical workers or anyone interested in ensuring a very thorough hand-washing can follow this instructional poster from the World Health Organization (PDF, 457 Kb). This method takes 40-60 seconds but addresses all areas of the hands specifically. This method also recommends using a paper towel to turn off faucets.

The study cited above stated people are more likely to wash their hands when there were signs posted reminding them to do it. The CDC offers some free hand-washing posters on their website. Also, a quick online search will provide many more options.

(Source: CDC)

Wind-Driven Fire Spreads in Baltimore

High winds this weekend spread large embers from a warehouse fire in Baltimore, sparking eight other fires, some of them a mile away. Luckily, all but one building was a vacant property and no one was injured in this "multiple, multi-alarm" fire event. Departments from three other counties were called in to assist.

Wind-driven fires and blowing embers are most often associated with wildfires but can cause ample damage in residential areas and cities as well. While wildland firefighters and crews are trained to take wind strength and direction into account when working a fire, fewer municipal fire departments alter their tactics during structural firefighting to account for wind conditions.

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) states wind-driven fires have "led to a significant number of firefighter fatalities and injuries." Their site diagrams how winds as low as 10 miles per hour will change the fire dynamics inside

a building, and shares lessons learned from the fire tests performed jointly with the Fire Department of New York and the Polytechnic Institute of New York University.

FireRescue1 describes the [pressurizing effect wind has on structures](#), noting several firefighter fatalities directly linked to wind. The article lists seven steps fire departments can use to help manage wind-driven structure fires.

(Source: [NIST](#))

"Left of Boom": Preventing Explosive Devices

Looking at a bombing event as a left-to-right timeline, "left of boom" is a term for the time before a bomb explodes. "Right of boom" is the aftermath post-explosion. Keeping left of boom is a term for the ongoing effort to stop bombs and bombers through detection and prevention.

Domestic Preparedness (DomPrep) journal's newly formed Preparedness Leadership Council International recently released its first report. "[Explosives: Prevent, Detect, Deter –'Left of Boom'](#)" (PDF, 2 Mb) looks at the complex issues surrounding preventative security measures and methods used to better detect a possible bombing attack. The report also includes survey results from over 1,000 DomPrep readers and members of the public.

One of the takeaways from the report is the idea that while technology has its place in the equation, the main tool in the bombing prevention toolbox is information sharing. Suspicious activity reporting and intelligence gathering are critical; as one security director stated: "The best way to stop the boom is to stop [terrorists] during the [pre-attack] surveillance activities."

Other topics covered include defining risk, defining "success" as it relates to bombing events, the legal aspects of security and privacy, adaptability of the bombers and security, information sharing and communication, and the resource and training investments needed by agencies.

(Source: [DomPrep](#))

National Mass Care Strategy Webinar Series

The [National Mass Care Council](#) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) announce the 5th installment of the National Mass Care Strategy (NMCS) webinar series "[How Task Forces Strengthen Mass Care Preparedness and Response](#)."

The webinar emphasizes how Multi-Agency Mass Care Task Forces have become an important resource for effective preparedness and response during times of disaster. It will focus on the evolution of task forces and their use in various operations – a disaster incident, a mass care exercise, and a national community event.

Presenters include representatives from the Maryland Department of Human Resources, the Alaska Fire Service, The Salvation Army, and FEMA. The webinar is scheduled for November 12th from 3:00 - 4:00 pm EST. The webinar will have both the audio and video through the computer – there is no call in number. A recording of the Webinar will be provided soon after the presentation and posted on the National Mass Care Strategy Website.

(Source: [National Mass Care Strategy](#))